

Local Detention System Profile

California's 456 adult jails and 116 juvenile halls and camps play a critical role in the state's correctional system. When arrested, adults are booked into county or city jails, and minors into county juvenile halls. The most serious offenders remain in these local detention facilities awaiting court disposition of the charges.

Local detention facilities also confine persons after court sentencing or adjudication. Almost two-thirds of all convicted adult felons serve county jail time (usually up to 12 months) as part of a felony probation sentence. Likewise, courts frequently place juveniles who committed felonies in local juvenile detention facilities that keep offenders close to home and provide them with necessary education and treatment programs involving the ward and family.

To ensure that state and local policymakers have access to critical information about California's adult jail population, the BOC conducts a monthly survey that provides a comprehensive picture of the number of inmates in local jails, their status, and related issues. In fulfilling this mandate, the BOC – in collaboration with local agencies – collects pertinent data from all 58 counties and reports this data quarterly to counties and annually to the Legislature. Appendix A provides results of the 1997 Jail Profile Survey, which included the following county jail findings:

- ✓ 1.19 million people were booked into California's county jails;
- ✓ 77,633 jail inmates were in custody per day (average daily population/ADP) and the system had a single day population high of 83,845 (exceeding the number of board rated beds, which is 70,963);
- ✓ 70 percent of the jail population were either charged with or convicted of a felony;
- ✓ the ADP was comprised of 55,288 inmates charged with felonies, 21,099 charged with misdemeanors, and 1,246 unspecified;
- ✓ 49 percent of inmates were classified as requiring maximum security confinement;
- ✓ 58 percent of jail inmates were awaiting trial or disposition, and 42 percent were serving a jail sentence imposed by a court;
- ✓ the total ADP included 39,584 non-sentenced males and 27,927 sentenced males, 5,443 non-sentenced females and 4,679 sentenced females, and 129 juveniles (all male and all non-sentenced);
- ✓ 22 counties representing over 68 percent of the jail system's ADP were operating under court-ordered population caps which place a ceiling on admissions and require the early release of inmates;
- ✓ 274,047 inmates were released early due to population caps and lack of bed space;
- ✓ 10 percent of jail inmates were undocumented aliens; and

- ✓ over 2.6 million arrest warrants (including 251,567 felony warrants) were unserved.

Counties were unable to provide the BOC with information on specific booking charges, date and time of booking releases, and operating costs by facility. However, aggregate data on jail and juvenile facility capital and operational costs are available (see pages 6-7).

The BOC separately collects and reports data on city jails and sheriff's substations (Type I facilities). For fiscal year (FY) 1997/98, this process resulted in the following profile:

- ✓ 497,794 people were booked into California's city jails (9 percent were juveniles);
- ✓ 1,891 inmates were in custody per day (ADP), with a single day population high of 3,899;
- ✓ 35 percent were booked on felony charges and 53 percent on misdemeanor charges (the remainder were in jurisdictions unable to specify); and
- ✓ 8,562 inmates were transferred to another facility solely for medical/mental health reasons.

In FY 1995/96, the Legislature transferred responsibility for local juvenile detention facilities from the California Youth Authority to the BOC. Working in partnership with local agencies, the BOC developed a survey in 1997 for collecting data on these county juvenile facilities. Although these data are not yet available, information from a variety of sources shows:

- ✓ In 1996, over half of all minors in juvenile halls committed crimes against persons.
- ✓ Many county juvenile facilities are crowded, others are operating under court-ordered population caps or over rated capacity, and some have detainees sleeping on the floor.
- ✓ Most facilities are 25 to 50 years old and were not designed to confine today's serious and violent young offenders. Many facilities are dilapidated and simply "worn-out."
- ✓ The number of juveniles between the ages of 11 and 17 (responsible for 99 percent of juvenile arrests) is projected to increase by one-third in the next decade.

In FY 1997/98, the BOC established a Juvenile Facility Crowding Work Group to examine crowding issues. Comprised of chief probation officers, juvenile facility superintendents, Board members and a child advocate attorney, this group developed a process to assess the impact of crowded facilities and provided information and training that will assist the BOC in determining if local facilities are suitable for the continued confinement of minors.